2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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765 778 Pl. 32 illustrates a number of objects used in the *pukamuni* and *kulama* rituals.

[411] [531] Pl. 32A, B, are two of the beautifully carved ceremonial spears known respectively as the male *pukamuni* spear, *tunkaringa*, and the female spear, *tunkaguni*. These are made purely as a gift to the dead, they appear to have no other function.

[114] [322] [412] At the time of Spencer's visit to Melville Island during 1911, the aborigines told him that these spears were cut with cockle shells. During 1920 a Melville Island man in Darwin gave me the same information, adding that the making of a double-sided female spear, 32B, with shell tools occupied an old man about three months, and the single-sided male spear, 32A, about two.

Pl. 32C is the forked throwing stick, *miluanta*, with which *Tjapara*, the moon-man injured *Purukupali*, and 32D, the plain throwing stick, *muruguna*. These are used in the *kulama* and *pukamuni* rituals, as well as for hunting and in personal quarrels.

[302] [413] Pl. 32E, G, are two interesting tools called *portas*, used for printing lines of dots on the bodies of the men and women. The colour is crushed to a thin paste, spread on a flat rock, and the *porta* rocked backward and forward in the paint to load the *porta*. The *porta* is then rocked on the body printing a line of dots.[98]

[515] [413] Pl. 32F is a curious ceremonial scratching stick used by the *Kilipaniati kulama* initiate to scratch himself during the period when he is not allowed to do so with his hands.

Pl. 32H, J, are two burial poles, *tudinis*, which were erected on the grave. These will be described in Section 10.

9. THE MESSAGE STICKS

202 765 Message sticks, under the general name of *purunkita*, are used by the Tiwi for several purposes; personal requests to fellow tribesmen asking for presents or supplies (Fig. 5E); invitations to other groups to perform ceremonies (Fig. 5F, G, H), and in association with the *pukamuni* rituals.

When the ceremonial leader appointed the "workers" to cut the poles (p. 74), he also sent messengers carrying specially carved sticks (*purunkitas*) to each totemic group on Melville and Bathurst Islands, telling them when the final *pukamuni* rituals were about to start.

[301] [302] As each messenger neared his destination he painted himself entirely in white and donned his goose-feather ball, *tokwianga*, his chest ornaments,

[98] The lines of dots on *Wurarkuti* (frontispiece) were made with a *porta*.

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how a slow canoe journey had made him late for a recent *pukamuni* ceremony.

(*b*) "I was sick in the Darwin hospital. Sister Philips said it was because I had had too much grog."

(*c*) "There was a man at Cockle Point (opposite the Bathurst Island Mission), who wanted to kill me with a spear. So I changed myself into a mullet and he didn't see me."

Another singer chanted,

(*a*) "I am a goose and a man cast his throwing stick and hit me."

(*b*) "I want that girl from Bathurst Island to wash her with fresh water to make it square for giving away my sister."[86]

Another *Mikingula*, *Palitara*, aired his differences with a woman, *Batali*, in the following song.

(*a*) "I fed *Batali*, but she did not give her daughter to me as a wife."[87]

(3) *Collecting the Kulama Yam*

Early on the following morning, the *Mikinatrinas*, *Mikintaras*, the *Mikiatarimas* and *Mikingulas*, went to the ceremonial ground of the previous evening. They first dipped their hands in a bark container filled with water, throwing some over their bodies; then, taking a mouthful, they squirted water into the air in imitation of rain, afterwards calling out "Oom-oom", to symbolize thunderstorms. Taking two small sticks, one in each hand, the men used them to clean the wax from their ears, afterwards standing the sticks upright in the ground.[88]

Placing their palms on a sheet of bark covered with white paint, the men patted their hair, chest, wrists and pubes (Pl. 44c), turning toward the north as they again called out "Oom-oom", in imitation of thunder.

Following this ritual, each *kulama* man painted another with a design in white (Pl. 42a). The leader then picked up the bark basket, held it on his arm, and facing north, south, east and west, again called "Oom-oom", while he made a drum-like sound, symbolical of thunder, by hitting the basket with his hand. After this the men set out to collect the *kulama* yams. They were

[86] I did not find out the significance of this ritual.

[87] When a woman promises her daughter to a man, it is the duty of the future son-in-law to give her continuous presents of food. On this occasion, the woman had accepted *Palitara's* gifts, but when her daughter was old enough, she gave the girl to another man.

Quarrelling at a *kulama* ceremony is forbidden, otherwise *taini*, the *kulama* sickness, will destroy all the participants. This prohibition allows an aboriginal, such as *Palitara*, to air his grievances without causing a quarrel, even though, as on this occasion, the defaulting person was present.

[88] The meaning of this ritual is obscure. According to the aborigines it prevents trouble and quarrelling during the *kulama* rituals.

123 sional patch of grass, which the rushing fire had missed, there was not a living green plant below the four-foot line. Burning the country is an annual occurrence and many are the laws governing 221 who may burn and who may subsequently hunt in the newly cleared 224 land. Because the fires are set each year, there is no accumulation of dry tinder to feed the fire and allow it to rage uncontrollably. Only the grass and a few fallen logs catch and these will burn rapidly and fiercely, but for a very short period. Any gap in the vegetation will stop the fire and the heavy dew, falling in the evening, will also put out the flames, leaving perhaps only isolated, smouldering logs to burn through the night. Until the first shoots of new grass push [421] their way through the charred ground, the individual hunter who set the fire has exclusive rights to the area he set alight. Of course, no one except those who belong to that country may burn without [671] permission of the owners. As far as possible, these laws are still upheld.

123 We soon came to a branch in the path and Albert indicated that we two girls should continue straight ahead; he would stop behind. In front of us stretched the fresh-water swamp. Out of the almost inky but clear water rose the gnarled paperbark trees, their roots so intertwined they almost formed a floor, albeit a most slippery and irregular one, over the rotten vegetation in the bottom of the swamp. I picked a particularly large rooted tree for my bath [515] tub, and a short distance away Agnes did the same. If one was careful not to disturb the fine deposit on the bottom but managed to stay on top of the slippery roots, the clear cool water was as sweet and soft as one could wish for. We stayed for about an hour, washing ourselves and our clothes, but finally an impatient call from Albert put an end to this pleasure. Albert had been hunting for a possum, but in this area so close to the camp, they had already been depleted.

123 Instead of returning to camp, Albert decided that now was as 411 good a time as any to cut his *milingani*, the sticks with which they kill the geese. After another mile or so into the bush, we came to a 322 grove of stout bushes of a kind I had not seen before. They had [223] long, straight branches of about a half-inch diameter. These Albert

evening to kill geese. When they returned with only three geese, a long conference was held. I offered all the food I could spare and it was decided that, in return for a few yams and some of the goose, I should make dampers and put jam on them for the children, all of whom were under five and very hungry, and give small pieces of tobacco to the men and women. This was Albert's, Agnes's, and Big Jack's tobacco, and so everyone traded something and all pronounced it a fair deal. I cooked the damper, smothered it with jam and, with Agnes prompting, called, "Kakritjui Kali." "Little ones, come." The five who could walk, ran, then stood shyly by while I handed each a piece; then they ran back to their mothers. Soon they were back and, nudged by their mothers, all murmured "Thank you very much." This was a phrase I never heard, either in the native language or in English, when they were receiving from another native. Giving and receiving were so much a part of their life that among themselves "thank you's" seemed unnecessary.

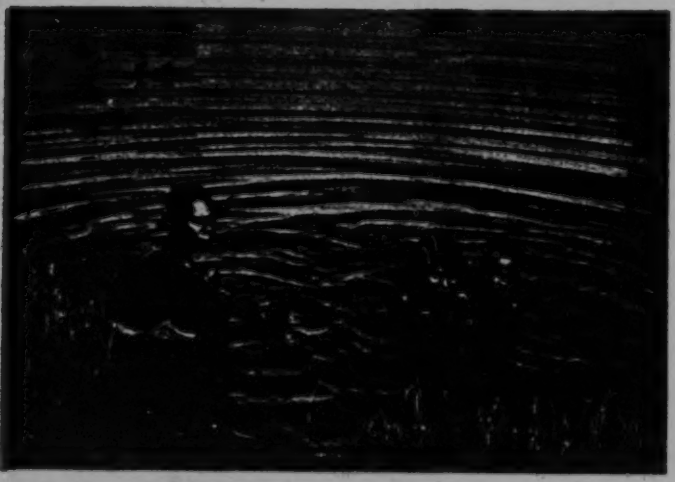

Fig. 16. Agnes, Flicy, and Crissy-boy cooling off in the river

12:Goodale E-5 (1954) 1957 O120 Tiwi O120

123 The following day we finally went hunting. Peter, his wife Dorrie, and daughter Althea, Filicy and her son Crissy-Boy, Albert, Agnes and I all squeezed into the canoe and paddled about two miles upstream to the next landing. Tudiunginarim, "white-paint-place," [177] used to be an old camp of the white buffalo shooter, Joe Cooper, who at the turn of the century was the first white contact for many of these people. It was very hot and the women took their children 123 into the water, waist deep near the bank, for a swim. It was easy 291 for them in their *nagas*, for when they came out they merely wrapped a dry one around and slid the wet one off underneath very ● 515 modestly. I, in my shorts and shirt, finally gave in to the temptation 609 and, vowing that if I were to live here longer I would take up the native costume, went in fully dressed. This modesty was a funny thing; they who wore no clothes until contact with white men, were being modest only for my sake, and in return I could do no less. So with dripping clothes, which incidentally felt wonderful in the heat, I set off following Albert and Agnes.

123 The nature of the bush was the same as that in back of 224 Minianapi and indeed the same as that around Snake Bay: the same trees, the same burned earth, the same fan palms and pandanus, and the same flatness. The natives always knew where they were; I never did. We were looking for possums and as these furry marsupials sleep in hollow trees during the day, we investigated every likely tree for evidence that they had recently climbed it. Sometimes the little tears in the rough bark could only be seen silhouetted against the sun; at other times the dry ground around the base of the tree would show very definite tracks. Soon Agnes, who was off somewhere to the left of Albert and me, gave two high-pitched calls. [198] In the hunting language I had already learned, one call meant "I'm here, where are you?" and would be answered by their companions with a similar single call. However, two calls meant "Come; I've found something." So we turned in the direction of the call and soon found Agnes standing by a short, hollow tree. Albert took his axe and cut a long pole which he then thrust up through a hole in the tree's base and wiggled. Out popped a large grey possum which sat on the top of the tree trying to make itself as small as possible. Agnes and Albert threw all manner of sticks and stones at it and finally managed to knock it down, when it scuttled away.